

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000618

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, INR/NESA
NSC FOR E. MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04-08-14

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CE](#) [IN](#) [CHR](#)

SUBJECT: Sri Lanka: Foreign Minister-designate
Kadirgamar requests a visit to Washington

Refs: Colombo 611, and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

[11.](#) (U) This cable contains an action request -- see para 7.

[12.](#) (C) SUMMARY: New Foreign Minister Kadirgamar would like to visit Washington in May. He appreciated the US's neutrality during the election. On the Peace Process, the new government "has no grip yet." India has been standing in the shadows on peace and should play a greater role. The President will keep the Rehabilitation Ministry for herself, and hopes to begin quick impact projects in the North and East. Ambassador asked for Sri Lankan support in the UNHRC. END SUMMARY

[13.](#) (C) Ambassador paid a call on Foreign Minister-designate Kadirgamar on Apr 8. Kadirgamar confirmed that he was in fact the choice for Foreign Minister, but expected the new cabinet would not be sworn in until Saturday, April 10. Kadirgamar said that as one of his first acts, he would want to go to Washington, where he hoped to meet both Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage. Early May might be a good time. Ambassador said he would ask Washington about a visit, but cautioned that the busy schedules of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary might make it difficult to find a time when both would be available. Kadirgamar seemed to accept that.

[14.](#) (C) Ambassador said that, as he had told new PM Rajapakse that morning, the US valued its relations with the country of Sri Lanka, not with any particular party or person and wanted to work with the new government on our common goals--peace and prosperity for the country. Kadirgamar said the neutral stance of the US during the election had been noted and much appreciated. He contrasted this with what he considered a biased approach by the Japanese, citing some remarks of Special Envoy Akashi.

[15.](#) (C) Ambassador said that Kadirgamar had been quoted yesterday when he met with Indian High Commissioner Sen that India should play a larger role in the peace process. What did that mean? Kadirgamar said that there was no specific idea. He thought that since the fiasco of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in the 1980's, India had been "standing in the shadows," and this was unnatural, given Indian's role in the region. Ambassador asked whether the new government had given thought to the role of the Tokyo co-Chairs. Kadirgamar said that he himself greatly appreciated the Tokyo Declaration, especially paragraph 18 (which sets out benchmarks for the peace process.) He very carefully did not endorse any specific role for the Co-Chairs, however, commenting that the new Government "did not have a grip yet" on the issue and would need to sort things out. He said that the President would keep the Rehabilitation Ministry for herself, and hoped to begin some quick impact projects in the North and East to improve the lives of the people there.

[16.](#) (C) Ambassador raised the ongoing UN Human Rights Commission and Cuba and China. Details Septel.

[17.](#) (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: Kadirgamar was his usual smooth self. We think his desire for a quick trip to Washington to be useful, a clear signal of his desire to link up with the US. We request the Department to see if such a trip could be scheduled. Because of the Deputy Secretary's involvement in Sri Lanka issues, we believe a meeting with him is essential. If a short call on the Secretary could be scheduled in the same time period, that would enhance a visit. END COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST.

[18.](#) (U) Minimize considered.
LUNSTEAD